

Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: Denny Holland

Date of Interview: December 18, 2008

Location of Interview: NCTC

Interviewer: Mark Madison

Approximate years worked for Fish and Wildlife Service: 30+

Offices and Field Stations Worked, Positions Held: Maintenance – Santee; Refuge Manager Trainee -- ??; Refuge Manager – Cape Romain; Refuge Manager - Holla Bend; Refuge Manager - Eufaula; Refuge Manager - Back Bay

Most Important Projects: re-introduction of beaver/deer/turkeys/etc.; re-introduction of alligators; relocation of ducks; taking control of access issues at Back Bay Refuge.

Colleagues and Mentors: Gerald F. Baker; Larry Givens; Smith Canunt; Paul Stern; Doctor Hunter Hancock.

Most Important Issues:

Brief Summary of Interview: early life growing up on refuges; father's career – both outside of and within FWS, including stints at Carolina Sandhills, Kentucky Woodlands, Santee, etc. and the re-introduction of beaver/deer/turkeys/etc; watching the Army train for WWII on refuge property; segregation in the 40's in Somerton; Army training/work; going back to college on the GI Bill; starting FWS career; introduction of uniforms to FWS – first uniform allowance; FWS career up to 1962.

Other people mentioned in interview: Mr. May Johnson, Mr. Brad Sullivan, Arthur Knox ?, General Patton , Miss Lenore Broughton, Thurgood Marshall, Briggs versus Elliot -- Mr. Briggs and Mr. Roddy Elliott, Mr. Fran Gillette, Tom Martin, John Eadie.

Mark Madison – Alright, today is Thursday, December 18th, 2008, and we're doing an oral history with Denny Holland. And interviewing him is Mark Madison; and we're doing it at NCTC. So, welcome Denny, it's good to have you here, finally. Got you in the chair.

Denny Holland – Well it's nice to be up here, for the first time, which is a... real experience.

[General laughter]

Mark Madison – Just for the note of the transcriptionist -- that is a lie.

[General laughter]

Mark Madison – Alright, Denny. Well, this is going to go on several tapes, and I should mention for the transcriptionist this is Tape One. But, tell us a little about your youth, actually; where you were born; what year; growing up.

Denny Holland – Okay. I was born in a fire watchman's house, at the foot of a fire tower, believe it or not, in Mar's Bluff, South Carolina. Rural -- no hospital, so... midwifed.... And, at the time, my dad was working part-time for the South Carolina Forestry Commission, as a watchman. And... for watching for forest fires... and that was 1934 – August the 21st, 1934. And then my dad was... went to work with the Florence Fish and Oyster Company as a traveling route man. This was in the height of the Depression, and jobs were few and far between. So, he was doing that all week long. And on the weekends he would go pick up fish, oysters - depending on what the season was - and then, during the week, dropping it off at rural grocery stores, throughout South Carolina. So, anyway, when the opportunity came along, in 1939, to go to work with the Bureau of Biological Survey, he took a big pay cut to do that. But... a hundred dollars a month was what his pay was, and a house. So, free house and a hundred dollars a month. And the big thing was -- he only had to work five and a half days a week. Saturday was a half day.

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – That was a big improvement for him. And this was at Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge. And he went to work there in April of 1939. So, from April '39, until... gosh, long time later, we were there at Sandhills. Actually, until August the 21st, 1942. And when we moved to Decatur. But that's slightly jumping ahead. But, Sandhills came from the Resettlement Administration. It had been burned over, turpented... long leaf pine, and all of these pine trees that were remaining, had been cat-faced for turpentine. And so, even as a kid, I mean, as a small child, there were a lot of turpentine stills that were still left there, and you could find all of the amber, the rosin, the left over [indecipherable]. So, it was very interesting. There was no wildlife to speak of. Almost none. As one of... Mr. **May Johnson**, this old timer that was there, told me that 'I don't know what yur doin' here, there ain't a damn thing here except rattlesnakes, bobcats, and wire grass.'

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – So that we used... I used to ride with Dad on the trails that the WPA and CCC had developed, you see. Oh, by the way, there was a big WPA camp and CCC camp there. CC Camp was down at [Cheraw], but they did the recreation type developments on that. But, anyway, used to ride the trails, looking for deer track. If you found a deer track - that was something to note. And looked in a lot of Dad's old diaries, you know, found 'da...da...da...da...' and, you know, from a small kid, I was looking for tracks - animal tracks. 'What kind of track is that, Dad? Hmmm... that's a coon. Okay.' Riding around, looking for such things. And, in 1940, we... I say 'we', the Refuge brought in a bunch of deer that had been trapped at Bulls Island, which is part of Cape Romain Refuge. And they brought them up there and released them. Seems as if there's something like four does and one buck that was in the first release. And I do recall that these were awfully nervous critters. Whenever they turned loose, no matter, gracious, they would, you know, just very high strung. Jumping. And they took off. And of course, we made a great effort to follow up and see if we could see any more tracks of them, which we did. Okay. Also in 1940, one of the Predator and Rodent Control agents, his name was Smith Canunt, trapped and brought beaver - about a dozen beaver - and we released them there on the Refuge. And I was with Pop whenever we did that. And later, you know, people said 'where'd all these beaver come from?' 'Cause they were plugging up culverts and everything else. 'Don't know.' But it... but they created so much wood duck habitat, you know, just they... just perfect [indecipherable]. And it was really beautiful, the first time I saw a beaver dam. And it was like 'oh, my gracious! Look at that!' Never seen one before. And the other thing, of course, was, here again, from Bulls Island, was wild turkeys. They were released later. That was... God, that was in, I guess that was in about 1950, just before we went to Santee. So, anyway, during the early '40's, we were at Carolina Sandhills. And then, in... on my birthday, we arrived... August the 21st 1942 we arrived at Wheeler Refuge and Dad was promoted from... his title when he went to work for Bureau of Biological Survey was 'laborer / patrolman' and as I said, for a hundred a month. And he got promoted during World War II to Assistant Refuge Manager. And that was really an accomplishment now. He was... Dad was an educated person. He had won a scholarship to the Citadel, at South Carolina, and so he had a more education than 95% of the rest of the citizens, even though he was only there for, I think, about two years. But his background was... well, he knew what he was doing. he went... somewhere along the way, he went to work for General Electric, and they sent him to school in Lynn, Massachusetts. He ran a steam plant back in South Carolina after GE trained him how to use steam and service the generators. Anyway, back to his career with Fish & Wildlife. He did construction, so he was... oh, by the way, he grew up on a farm, so he knew farming, too, as....

Mark Madison – Knew how to work. [Laughter]

Denny Holland – Oh, yeah, you know....

Mark Madison – People underestimate that.

Denny Holland – Yeah. Yeah. How to work. How to work from can do to cain't. So, that was his philosophy. But in 1942, he was transferred to Wheeler. And I recall seeing steam paddlewheel towboats. And first time we were out on the Tennessee River... and that was really, my gosh, look at that! We didn't go to the movies, because, you know, we didn't have any money. And besides, who

could afford it. But the... I recall seeing the stacks on that towboat, and just belching black smoke, and the wake from that. The Refuge had three inboard boats. one of them was a Crisscraft and the other was a work boat that, in retrospect, it had to have a Model 'A' engine in it, but, you know, [indecipherable] very simple. Very simple boat. But it got the job done. Most of the transportation was by vehicle, of course, but the Refuge encompassed both sides of the Tennessee River for a number of miles. All the way... all the way to Huntsville... Redstone Arsenal. Redstone Arsenal was part of the Refuge before [it] became the arsenal. So, in 1941, '42, it was taken for Redstone. Anyway. So there was a lot of [indecipherable] work, and I got to go with him on many occasions. First time I saw a catfish that was so much bigger than I was. I mean, that was a monster. Taken on a tout line. And... mussel fishermen were catching... draggin' for mussels. Just common, everyday, experience for us. See that kind of thing. [Whuuu – sound effect.] We burned down the school, too. I didn't do it. I mean...

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – I was glad to see that school burn [indecipherable]. We went to elementary school... my two older sisters and I went to elementary school there in... outside of Decatur, in a little community called [indecipherable]. It's no longer a little community. Kathy and I were there just a couple of weeks ago and it's [schwooo... ummm – sound effects] something else. But, during the war... they... TVA... I guess it was TVA, I'm not sure who actually built the facilities, but, very modern. Everything was modern brick houses. The manager's quarters were just beautiful. Ours was much smaller -- considerably smaller. But it didn't have power in it yet. We... as I said, we moved in and there was no electricity yet. Hadn't been put in. so, Dad and the patrolman dug the ditch from the service building to the house, which was... oh, I don't know, probably 50 yards, at least 50 yards, and buried the cable to pull in the electricity. And I was... like I say, we were there couple of weeks ago, and it's... I guess it's the same underground service that was put in then. And the Army Air Corps was doing... they had a landing strip across the highway -- it wasn't a highway, it was a dirt road at the time -- that ran by the front of the [indecipherable] course there, across over there. And they were... primary pilot training, with oh... bi-wing Steerman aircraft. And one of the things that I noted was that the road to what is now the Refuge Visitor Center is called 'Airport Road.' So I asked the Interpretative Specialist there, I said, 'do you have any idea where that name came from?' They said 'no' and I said, 'as a kid I was used to watch pilot training right here, right out in front here it was.'

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – Yep, that was... it was... just everyday... everyday over and over and over. So, it was... we were there for... let's see, from '42 until... Dad then transferred back to Carolina Sandhills when the Manager at Sandhills got drafted. Dad was older, so he... with three kids, he was exempt. He did have an offer to go in Navy and it... accept a commission, and he kinda figured 'ummm... perhaps I ought not to.' I'm glad he didn't, 'cause I would not have been able to ride around and see the things I did. So we went to... he went as Manager, back at Carolina Sandhills, where he had started. And he had started in 1939. And then, in 19... December of '44, he went back as Manager. And then, in that interim period, Carolina Sandhills then... was then being used as a bombing range and as an aerial gunnery range. And

the bombs were 100 pound practice bombs, with a ten pound black powder charge in it. And every new class of pilots and bombardiers, you know, would scatter those things all over the place. And then fires were erupting everywhere. So from... from then, I got a little experience fighting fires. And I was... what? 10 years old then, I guess. Yeah, about 10 years old.

Mark Madison – Never too young to learn...

Denny Holland – Never too young to learn...

[Overlapping voices]

Denny Holland – I wasn't... oh, the manpower pool was pretty dog-gone low. Old, elderly, gentlemen became the whole work force there. And Mr. Brad Sullivan, I think, was 70 at the time when he was working. And [Arthur Knox ?] was also about 70. They did as well as they could. And everybody pitched in when they could. And it was it was, needless to say, an interesting time. We survived. we had a garden big garden we... oh, yeah, one of the things that was permitted on refuges back in those times was... and they were furnished – chicken houses were furnished, barns, and pasturage, was part of the package that you were allowed to utilize. And of course, we had a garden, too, growing [indecipherable]. And I quickly was assigned the job of milking the cow. Now, listen, let me tell you something. I learned so much from that cow. That is certainly extremely rare in all of my life, up 'till now. And I learned two things quite well – patience, which I have worn pretty thin a number of times; but the other thing was how to cuss. You could have the most aggravating, damn thing, you know, where you want to get [indecipherable] I learned those. And a garden [ummm... whuuu – sound effects] – there was no such thing as insecticides, so you had to go out there and check the tomato plants for hornworms - tomato hornworms – and, you know, it didn't take long for worms to eat up a bunch of tomato plants. And beetles that get on your cabbage and collard greens. Oh, Lord, did we grow some collards! We lived off the land an awful lot. And we survived the War years. Everything was scarce, but we had a cow; we had chicken. So we had plenty of milk; plenty of butter; plenty of eggs. And we raised a lot of chickens. My job was... well, my job was to catch and kill the chickens. And, you know, you could do it several ways. I got to the point where, you know, just catch a chicken – and that was a job, you know. If you didn't make sure that the chicken was in the pens... then you could corner them. But if they was outside – aw, forget it. Well, let's wait 'till they go to roost, and then you get them. But, anyway, catch a chicken and [bloup bloup – sound effects], snap the head off, you know, wring the neck very quickly, and good. Also, you know, I know it sounds kind of bloody, and it was, if you chop the head off, you know, my god, the chicken... you wouldn't believe how much a chicken can jump after you [indecipherable] head off. We ate fryers. Every Sunday mama would have a fried chicken. And so we, you know, it took a lot. Broilers, I guess, was the proper term to use. We called them fryers. And you mentioned the fire in town. Uhh... yeah. You see, we had a woods fire [indecipherable], and the army, which was responsible for the ranges, and there was a black tent... by the way, that the army... enlisted men were part of the fire protection on the range. and so, the army furnished a city fire truck, which wasn't worth a toot to go out in the woods, 'cause, you know, you just... what we had was... what the Service had developed was just plain old two-&-half tonne truck with

a 500 gallon water tank and something like a Briggs & Stratton engine on it. And you climb up on the fender and drive along right beside the burning fire and use this spray nozzle... varied... one nozzle that you could, you know, knock the fire down. Well, the people behind them could use rakes, and rake the embers and everything away. All your job to do with the hose was to knock it down, cool it down enough, so that, you know, the following crew could secure the line. And anyway, Daddy was out, and Mr. Gardner was somewhere else, and our telephone system was... it wasn't a public system. It was a loop within the Refuge, which was, you know... 92000 acres is a pretty good sized territory. So, we had three different fire towers in there. And one of the towermen called. He was close to the little town of McBee, says 'there's a house on fire in McBee', you know. And Mama answered the call on the telephone 'cause we didn't have anybody [indecipherable] the area. So she told me 'somebody's house is on fire in McBee'. So the neighbor kid and I jumped on the truck and ran it. I was 11 years old at the time, I think. So I drove the truck into town; put out the fire; [laughter] came back. Ohh, did I get a butt whipping for that.

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – Daddy says, "You could have wrecked that truck."

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – That was his concern, you know. Not that we had done anything...

Mark Madison – An 11 year old had fought fire...

Denny Holland – "What would have happened if you would have wrecked that truck?" "I had the siren going, Dad."

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – Anyway, we were the heroes to other people, except [laughter] except my daddy.... Ahh... yeah, when you grow up on a refuge, and money is almost nonexistent, you learn to do a lot of things. And I was at my daddy's side every opportunity. So I was learning from him how to do things. And I haven't regretted... I've enjoyed every bit of it, so far. How's the water supply? I need a.... well, you know, it was kind of unusual that my father was on Carolina Sandhills on three... three different occasions. He started to work there in 1939. His first job as a manager then was in 1944. And then, in 1950, he went to Santee, and then later to Kentucky Woodlands and... which no longer exists by that.... But, he developed a... along the line there, prostate gland cancer, and his health got to the point there that [indecipherable], his Supervisor of Refuges, down in Atlanta, you know, asked him where he would like to go. And Dad's position was in South Carolina. So, it's a pretty long commute from western Kentucky to South Carolina. So he asked Larry if he could possibly go to Sandhills. So Mr. Givens worked out a swap with the managers down there. So Paul Stern went to Kentucky Woodlands, and Dad went to back to Sandhills, for his third time. And, I guess it was just about... before Kathy and I got married, and that was in 1959. So in 1959 Dad went back to Sandhills. And, anyway, by then I was working with

the Service, so then... I'm going to rest a little bit... I'd come down on a visit so Kathy and I... I was in school, and then when I went to work with Fish & Wildlife Service, guess what -- I started at Santee. So, they're about 90 miles apart. So we'd go up to McBee and visit Pap. Well, Sandhills is full of small streams, you know, just these beautiful little... we call 'em branches... crystal clear water that's... people... no contamination of any sort. So Dad always had some favorite places where he'd stop and get a cup of water, and of course, on occasion, he might even reach under the seat and pull out something else and have dip of water to go along with it. Maybe. And... but, very frequently, he would say 'whoow,' you know, 'here is a good stopping point.' So we'd stop. And we'd get out of the truck. And 'Dad, you keep sprinkling the bushes around here' and he says 'son, one thing that you don't know yet is you never want to pass up a good opportunity to pee.' I can appreciate that now. I know exactly what he means. Because, at that time, it didn't mean a thing to me.

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – So, you know, if I can give any advice - you never want to, you know, pass up an opportunity. You might never have that opportunity again. So, [indecipherable].... Anyway, that was little bit of his life there. One of the things that through the years that my father developed was a great friendship with the local people. And, his legacy lingers to this day. That there are a number of people that are now my age that remembered my dad, and the respect that folks had for him. Because, you know, they... rules were one thing, integrity was something else you [indecipherable]. 'I will do everything within my power to assist you.' And part of that, of course, was law enforcement. 'Now, you can't hunt on this wildlife refuge. I don't care if you don't have anything to eat. I will assist you in getting something to eat. Just don't bring that gun over here. Don't let me see you shoot in here.'

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – 'There's not anything here that you can do.' Preventive law enforcement was very effective in.... Well, let's see, how would I express it. 'Cause I used it myself, a number of times. 'I'll take this information, and I'll give you an opportunity to not do this again. If you do violate that, rest assured, I will see you when we go to court'. And, so, we handled things administratively, up to a point. Ahh. Anyway, back during the 40's and so forth, after the War, it... you know, there were a lot of veterans that came back to hunt. An awful lot of people came back to try to find something to work, and something to do. And, you know, some of the stories that I heard from people that lived nearby and had been in different areas of combat... theaters of operation, I guess, would be the proper term, were taking advantage of everything - training in particular - and, you know, we had some great people to work out at the refuge -- as a start. And then jobs in civilian life became more available, which paid a heck of a lot more money. So, anyway, opportunity to... well, my dad, to advance his career, was go down to Santee. Well, in 1949 he was responsible for Carolina Sandhills and for Santee, which was about 75 miles south of McBee. And, in addition to that, ohh, we... the Army turned over property at Camp McCall, which has now been breeding... much of the property has gone back to use by the special services... yeah... special forces, out of Fort Bragg, and anyway, he had that for a while. And it would eventually transferred over to the state. But...

Mark Madison – Let's take a break here, Denny.

Denny Holland – Yup [indecipherable]

Denny Holland – Just some things, to me, that, you know, that my mind was... I was curious about everything .

Mark Madison – Okay, Denny, let's talk about 1941, 1942, on Carolina Sandhills.

Denny Holland – Yep. The Refuge, in fact that whole area of South Carolina, was used as a maneuvering area for the US Army. And the Army was divided up into two groups -- the Reds and the Blues. And they were maneuvering... trying to develop tactics, of course. I recall seeing the Calvary unloading out of cattle cars - railroad cars – because, you know, they moved just about everything by rail in those days. And there were not enough guns for soldiers. And, by the way, the helmets were the British style, you know, just the tin hat. And they carried sticks for rifles. And it really made an impression on me. One of the soldiers gave his helmet. And I don't recall what happened to it, but I was so proud of that thing. And I recall that the Calvary soldiers all had such beautiful horses. Ohh, they were gorgeous. And of course everybody was quite proud of them. But, anyway, that was enough of that. But in 1942, we were... this was before Japan... the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor... but in the summer of 1942, excuse me, I've got my timeframe a little bit wrong on that, prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor we were really starting to become a little bit mechanized, not much - but a little bit. And General Patton, think he was still a colonel at that time, but he was, you know, just someone who made a dashing figure, and as Daddy said, he had the foulest mouth of any person he was ever around.

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – And... but when he spoke, or yelled, things happened. He had the tanks... halftracks... there were halftracks all over the place. You know, that was vehicles that had wheels up front and tracks on the rear, so it made an impression on a little kid. Anyway, that was, for me, a fascinating time. Ohh...

Mark Madison – Were you able to watch the maneuvers? Or how did...?

Denny Holland – Yeah! Oh, yeah!

Mark Madison – From where? From a safe...?

Denny Holland – All over the place. All around the headquarters there. And, they dug holes, you know. Got into foxholes and so forth. It's like, yeah, God, you know, 'Mom and Daddy wouldn't let me dig a hole out there', you know.

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – They're out there digging holes. And running over trees with these tanks.

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – Yeah, they were all over the place. And there were signs... part of the arrangements was 'off limits'. You know, they'd post signs where the Army was not supposed to go, such as 'off limits'. and that's where General Patton, or Colonel Patton, whatever his title was at that particular time, had some real differences with that, you know, [indecipherable] 'there's no place that are off limits to my troops we're going' and [sound effect -- crrrrkkkk] and away they went. And they did. Anyway, just kind of a little reflection, a little bit of thought....

Mark Madison – Well, earlier we were talking about how travel was more challenging...

Denny Holland – Oh. Oh, yeah.

Mark Madison – ... back in your father's day.

Denny Holland – It was. Transfers were not something that you would really discuss. It was 'your next duty station is going to be...' and 'you are to report there'. And... they did get moving companies though to transport your household goods and effects. Now livestock was something that just about every field station had, because that was part of survival. You know, your pay wasn't quite enough but you could live off the land, so to speak, with your livestock. Transportation... if you want to call per diem, was what, maybe five dollars a day for an entire family to go from point A to point B. And when you left... your per diem didn't begin until you left point A, and it absolutely ended when you got to point B. Didn't matter if your furniture was there or not. You had to make do with what you had. Consequently, you know, a lot of us doubled up with other Service employees. There... and to a certain extent that continued... Lord, up until present time. However, the per diem and so forth is different. Now, one of the problems was when Pop was transferred from Wheeler back to Carolina Sandhills, course we had a cow, a horse, and a pig. Well, it wasn't exactly a pig. It was more of a show... it was 100 and some pounds. And chickens. getting rid of the chickens was little bit of a problem, but Daddy had had to go on temporary duty to Sandhills earlier, so he... we had... the government had a sedan delivery - or a panel truck - at that time, a 1940 Ford panel truck. So he built chicken crates and loaded up the government vehicle with chickens. Transported them to South Carolina. And my great aunt, his aunt, was, you know, taking care of the temporary quarters there for him, 'cause the manager had already moved out. Anyway, the long and short of it was, she took care of the chickens while he had to come back to Alabama. But, what do you do with a hog? Well, he brought his brother back with him from South Carolina, and they butchered the hog the afternoon that the Mayflower moving van loaded up our furniture. And the butchered hog ended up being wrapped in a canvas and strapped to the bumper of our 1936 Studebaker sedan. And Daddy also brought back a bunch of eggs. God knows why. But, anyway, he, you know, he had a bunch of eggs, so Momma boiled them all up. and that trip, in the winter of 1944, we ate... drove all night, by the way, left in the evening from Decatur, Alabama, came down through Birmingham, across to Atlanta, across.... and sunrise... I vividly recall Stone Mountain at sunrise, you know, the impact was... God, I had never seen anything to look like that. Anyway, we got to

my grandmother's house in the afternoon, and Hubert -- that was the hog's name -- Hubert was frozen solid, and the back of the car was loaded with egg shells, where we had eaten all those dad-gummed eggs, and [sound effect – scheew]... and everybody accused me of passing so much gas [indecipherable].

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – [indecipherable] a lot of drinking beer [indecipherable]

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – I just remember them accusing me of...

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – ...making noxious noises... smells.

Mark Madison – Well, how about talking a little bit about your history; how you came to work for the Service. You were genetically predisposed to it. [laughter]

Denny Holland – You know I really had no intention whatsoever of going to work with Fish & Wildlife Service, 'cause, yeah, I've seen it from the get go. And in high school I had such an interest in... period in high school... by the way, we had a huge graduating class at Somerton, which is where the headquarters for Santee was, and still is for that matter... that was the mailing address. And that was in 1952. When I graduated, I was third in my graduating class of nine.

[General laughter]

Mark Madison – Top third of your class.

Denny Holland – Top third of the class.

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – Yeah. It was all white... hey, the place was segregated at that time. It's an interesting little side is, that was also the school district in... Somerton that was part of the first integration suite. My teacher, and several of them, had to testify in US District Court on that and... the 'separate but equal' rule was challenged. And I am so proud of Miss Lenore Broughton for having... after she had testified, she came back and she says 'I met the most brilliant attorney that I have ever met.' And of course, we were expecting, you know, hey, we were all segregationist [indecipherable] nothing else. But, she says, 'his name is Thurgood Marshall.' And we all say 'What? The NAACP lawyer? And you think he's wonderful?' She's... yeah... she says, 'now go... I want you...' And Scotts Branch School was only about three blocks from where we were. She says 'how many of you have ever been over there to take a look and look at the school itself?' And course, none of us had. And she says 'I want you to go do it, and then come back and tell me.' There was no way that anyone could ever say that it was equal. All

they wanted was a school bus -- the initial case was... involving, you know, a request for a school bus and simple justice.

Mark Madison – That’s amazing; your teacher met Thurgood Marshall. [Laughter]

Denny Holland – Oh yeah [indecipherable]. And it was... and a classmate of mine was the grandson of one of the lead characters involved. It was Briggs versus Elliot. And Briggs was the black person who wanted a school bus. And Mr. Roddy Elliott, whom we all knew, was chairman of the school board. And he said ‘no, you don’t need it.’ And, anyway, that’s it is a little side bar...

Mark Madison – In your dad’s day was the Biological Survey...

Denny Holland – Pardon?

Mark Madison – Were there any blacks working for the Biological Survey?

Denny Holland – Oh, heavens, not that I know of. Uhh uhh [negative]. Not in any professional capacities. As laborers, yeah, you know, in the unskilled categories, but not as... in any of the leadership roles, that I was aware of.

Mark Madison – That’s interesting. Well, what’d you do after high school? After graduating third of your class?

Denny Holland – Oh, I messed around and had a lot of fun. Hey, I got kicked out of some good schools.

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – I wasn’t ready... I went to Clemson and really wasn’t ready for college. And... but, I did learn how to, as my dad said I... it was Corps of Cadets, and it was a military school, at that time. He said, you know, I learned... in two years of college I learned how to shine shoes.

Mark Madison – [Laughter] That’s important.

Denny Holland – Yeah. You had to stand inspection. Also learned how to march and so.... But, anyway, I ended up in the draft in... drafted in the Army, and that’s when I began to grow up, got maturity. A drill sergeant can teach you a few things...

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – ... that others can’t. So I... I went through Army Basic Training at Fort Jackson. And they tested my abilities, and what I best suited for, and it turned out to be a mechanic. I was prohibited from many other categories ‘cause I’m blind in my left eye and have been since... oh, I don’t know, 1946 or something like that, when, fooling around, I bopped by eye and destroyed the central vision. And I still have peripheral vision so... you know, I’m fit for support duty, but not for combat. And thank heavens for that. But, at least, hey -- I shoot a rifle with no problem whatsoever. Anyway, I ended up in Korea, and that too, was a very maturing process. And it... find out what real... I thought we poverty in

the... in America, but I... you know, I really saw what poverty was like. And at that... was probably the best thing that ever happened... and second best thing. I won't say what best is -- probably marrying Kathy, but....

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – It did help me to grow up quickly. And when I came back, I got interested in the field of biology. And I decided that I probably wanted to go to work for the Soil Conservation Service. And, long and short of it is, that I ended up at Murray State College in western Kentucky. 'Cause, by then, Daddy'd transferred from Santee to Kentucky Woodlands, which is now known as the 'land between the lakes', between the Tennessee River and the Cumberland River, in western Kentucky. And Murray was only about 30 miles away. And I got under an outstanding proff -- Doctor **Hunter Hancock**. Most... one of the most demanding instructors I ever had. And that's what I needed. I took every course that the man offered. And when I graduated... it took me about three years, two and a half years, of being on the dean's list, to pull up my grade point average to....

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – ...it was so poor. But... and then I went to NC State. I decided that I real... instead of Soil Conservation Service, maybe I'd like to try Fish & Wildlife Service. And I applied for the examination, and they said 'oops, no, you don't qualify, because we just changed the rules. you must have 'x' number of hours in ecology, etc.' and a few other things like that where I was... I had biology, but not enough of the specific courses - ornithology being one of them. So... ummm... okay. So then I switched. And after graduation at Murray I went to NC State. And by then Kathy and I were married. And by then, Dad was, guess what, he was at Carolina Sandhills again. His cancer - he had prostate gland cancer - and he and Larry **Givens** had managed a transfer to get Dad closer to his doctor and family -- our family originally being from Florence area -- 'cause they thought he was terminal at any time. So did I, you know, very much afraid that he was so. So... I finished NC State and was out of school for almost a month, and Mr. **Givens** put me to work at Santee - guess where. Don't ever start work in a professional capacity where you have grown up, you know, it's... too many people know you and know the way you used to be.

[General laughter]

Mark Madison – That's true

Denny Holland – And all the crap that I had done then, and I was like...

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – 'Hey,' you know, 'you want to shoot some rabbits tonight...'

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – ... 'on the refuge?' 'No.'

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – Anyway, I started there in 1961, I think it was. Yeah. And a maintenance man until I could get reached on the register.

?? -- What year ? [Possibly Mrs. Holland's voice??]

Denny Holland – '61 was it, or '62?

?? – '61.

Denny Holland – Yeah, that's what I thought.

?? – Okay.

Denny Holland – I was correct in... I am correct.

Mark Madison – [Laughter]

Denny Holland – So, when I was reached on the register, I became refuge manager quote [sound effect -- ckq ckq] print, trainee, GS 485-5, annual salary - \$4045 per year. And, wow.... As maintenance man – temporary... oh, by the way, my net pay from assistant... from maintenance man to assistant manager trainee went up a dollar and 32 cents a pay period. So....

[General laughter]

Denny Holland – Oh, and by the way, oh, yeah, that was the first July of that year 'cause we were on the July fiscal year -- June 30th to July 1st fiscal -- that was our first uniforms. So we were given all given a hundred and twenty-five dollars for our initial uniform allowance. And that was really something.

Mark Madison – What did you wear before you...? What did people wear before the uniforms?

Denny Holland – Any clothes they wanted.

Mark Madison – Any clothes they wanted.

Denny Holland – Anything. Anything that was appropriate for their particular job. Yep. Overall... believe it or not, overalls - bib overalls - were a big thing, you know, for... basically for everyone who was doing grunt work. And in spite of the fact that my job title changed, I was still doing grunt work. We did not have a clerk at Santee under... and my refuge manager was **Gerald F. Baker**. Mr. Bakker had been, previously, manager at Kentucky Woodlands, back in the... from the 30's... sometime in the 30's. And I had ridden from Wheeler, which was, you know, just across the state of Tennessee, to western Kentucky, with my dad, in 1942, I guess it was, and picked up a tractor. And Mr. **Baker** was the manager there. So I remember distinctly this man that was fairly small -- he was about 5' 6" perhaps, anyway, he was my first manager at Santee. And he was in poor health. He was a heavy smoker, and emphysema was really bothering him. He was prone to get stuck also. He'd take the truck, or car, whatever was

there, and just drive in the most god-awful places, and bog it down. Just squish. And he'd sit there and just say 'well, let's see if I spin it a little bit harder', you know, just floorboard it. And mud, sand, [indecipherable], just fly, until there was nothing left. But then, we'd have to go get a tractor and pull it out. That was typical of Mr. Baker. And I was at Santee... Mr. Baker, as I said, his health was pretty poor, and he had to take retirement, because he just physically was not able to do the job. And Mr. Fran Gillette came down... Fran Gillette, at that time, was, oh, I... I guess, in those days, came down and told Mr. Baker he was retiring. He was in Atlanta, and this was, of course, prior to him becoming Chief of Refuges, a little while later. And he was... Baker was replaced by Tom Martin. And Tom had been Manager at Chincoteague, and was there during the Ash Wednesday of 1962 storm, and they... you know, wiped out Chincoteague - the Refuge - and Tom had done all the initial rebuild. And so it was time for a change. And he came down to Santee. And John Eadie had transferred in as pine area assistant over me and I... John was a 7 [indecipherable]. He and I have been friends for some time. And I was... then Kathy and I were transferred down to Cape Romain Refuge at McClellanville, South Carolina. and this was in... my... Colleen was born at Manning Hospital, South Carolina, in September 21st 1962. Mr. Givens allowed us to wait until October to transfer down to McClellanville. What a gorgeous, gorgeous place that place is, and was - prior to Hurricane Hugo. Almost no facilities on the mainland. And everything was islands, and offshore - marshes and so forth, and 60, 62 thousand acres there, so it was strung out, nice, big area. And wildlife [sound effect/whistle – schwoo], totally different kind of wildlife. You know, in the spring of the year, May and June, loggerhead turtles crawling on the beach, nesting on the capes. Just really something to behold. And Bulls Island was tucked in... some of the most gorgeous beaches. You know, long, flat beach. And also had turtles there. But, a completely different spectrum, got completely different island vegetation -- palmetto palms, live oaks - in abundance, loblolly pine, yew pine, turkeys, deer. By the way, that's where the turkey and deer came from for restocking Sandhills much earlier. And the Dominick House. A Mr. Dominick had owned the island back in the 30s, and built his own retreat over there. And....

Mark Madison – Wow. Let's take a break.